

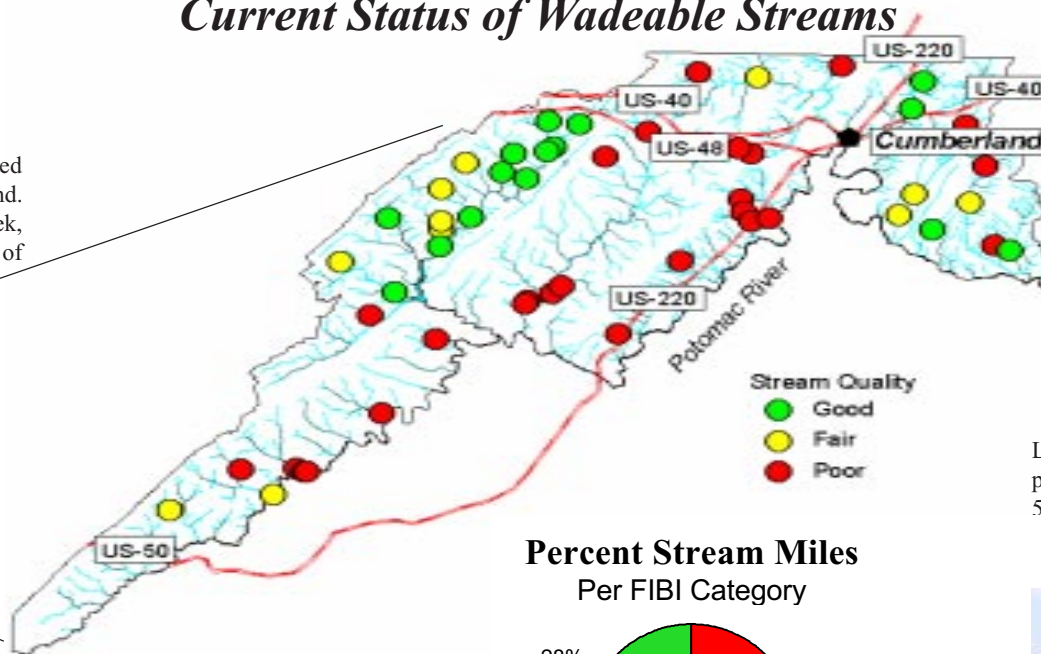
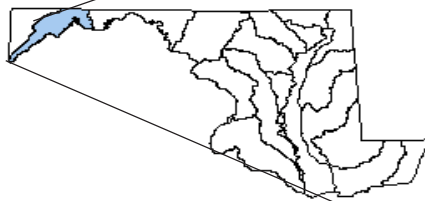


North Branch Potomac River Basin

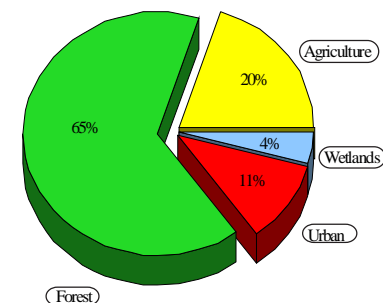
Current Status of Wadeable Streams

Where is the North Branch Potomac Basin?

The North Branch Potomac basin is located within Allegany and Garrett counties, Maryland. The Potomac River, Savage River, Wills Creek, and Evitts Creek are all part of the network of streams that make up the basin.



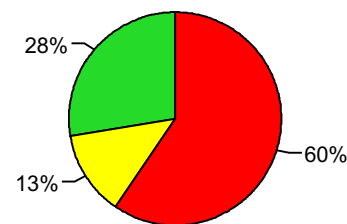
Land Use in the Basin



Land use in the North Branch Potomac basin is primarily forest. The basin covers an area of 502 square miles with a population density of 13 people per square mile.



Percent Stream Miles Per FIBI Category



The Fish Index of Biotic Integrity or FIBI is a measurement of stream quality based on fish communities.



What Lives in Our Streams?*



Estimated Fish Abundance:	1.6 million
Number of Fish Species:	30
Number of Gamefish Species:	6
Number of Reptile and Amphibian Species:	22

* Based on collections of the Maryland Biological Stream Survey in wadeable streams basin-wide during 1996.

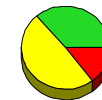
Water Quality



Oxygen - 100% of the streams had oxygen levels that met the state water quality standard of 5 mg/L.



Nitrate - 25% of the streams had nitrate levels that may affect aquatic life (>1mg/L). The main sources of nitrates are farm fertilizers and acid rain.



Buffering Capacity - 14% of the streams are poorly buffered against acid rain.

Good

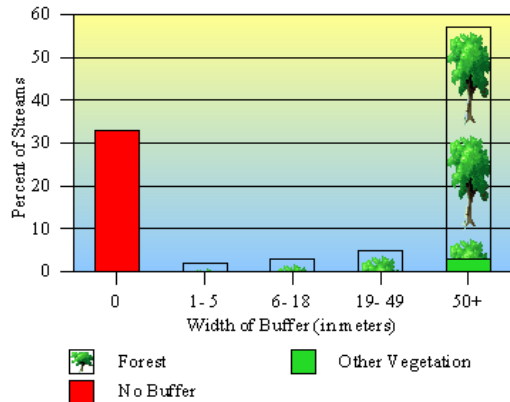
Fair

Poor

Big Run flows through the basin's scenic Savage River State Forest.

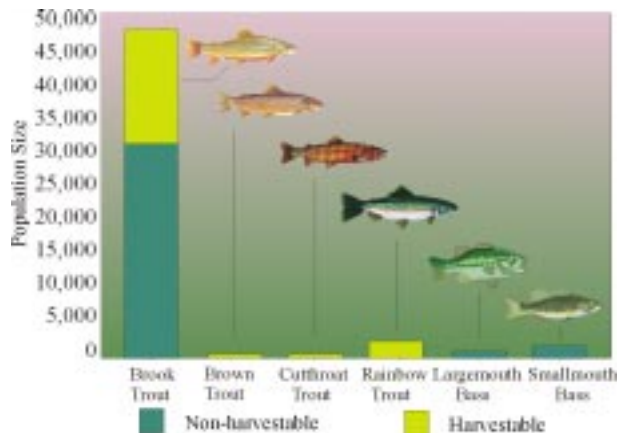
Riparian Zone

Trees, shrubs, and grasses that border a stream are called the stream's *riparian buffer*. This buffer zone can protect a stream against runoff, provides shade, stabilizes stream banks, and supplies food and shelter for aquatic life. A wide and intact buffer offers more protection than a narrow one. Riparian buffers in the North Branch Potomac basin are generally in good condition. We can help maintain these buffers by protecting streamside forests and planting trees in disturbed areas.



Gamefish

Six gamefish species were found in the basin, but most were smaller than the legal size limit. It appears that with the exception of brook trout, catchable gamefish prospects within the North Branch basin are limited in the smaller wadeable streams.



Did You Know???

- The Potomac River got its name from its early settlers, the Pawtomecks, members of the Algonquin nation.
- Acid mine drainage once destroyed much of the Potomac's headwaters, but the efforts of watershed protection organizations and the construction of the Jennings Randolph Reservoir have begun the healing. As a result, a world-class trout fishery is developing in the North Branch Potomac River basin.
- We may be losing an irreplaceable part of our natural heritage. There are currently at least two fish species in the basin at risk of local extinction, including rainbow darter.



The rainbow darter, rare in Maryland, is found in the North Branch Potomac Basin.

Community Involvement

Want to help? These community groups can show you how!

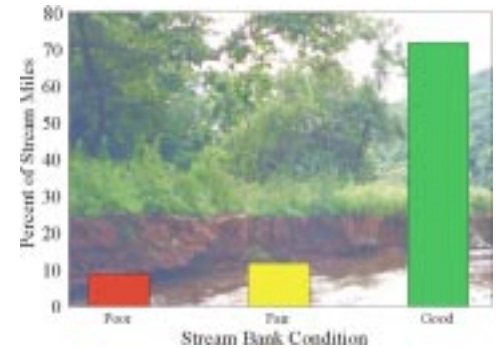
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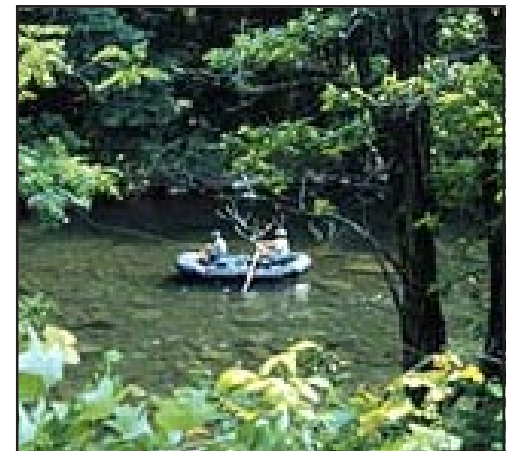
Stream Bank Stability

Eroded, unstable banks reduce habitat quality in streams and contribute to water quality problems in downstream areas. On average, the stability of stream banks in the basin is very good. Since the streams in this basin flow into the Chesapeake, bank instability causes an increase in downstream transport of nutrients and suspended sediments to the Bay. For this reason it is important that we maintain stream bank stability.



Recreation

The Rocky Gap State Park, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Natural History Park, Savage River State Forest, Potomac State Forest, and Big Run State Park provide many recreational opportunities in the basin. Popular activities include camping, hiking, picnicking, boating, swimming, and nature observations.



Boaters on the North Branch Potomac River.

For more detailed information on streams in the North Branch Potomac River and elsewhere in Maryland, contact Ann Smith of DNR/MANTA at (410)260-8611 or email at asmith@dnr.state.md.us.